

What are Singular and Plural Nouns?

A **singular noun** names one item only. Singular nouns refer to only one person, place, thing, or idea.

A **plural noun** refers to “more than one.” Plural nouns refer to more than one person, place, thing, or idea. Plural nouns often change spelling or add –s or –es to refer to more than one.

To make a singular noun plural, we most often add –s to the word.

Examples:

dog + s = dog**s**
chief + s = chief**s**

In some instances, we would add –es to the singular noun to form a plural noun. When the singular noun ends in –s, -ss, -x, -z, -ch, or –sh add –es to form the plural noun.



Examples:

spotch + es = spotch**es**
box + es = box**es**
wash + es = wash**es**
buzz + es = buzz**es**
bus + es = bus**es**
chintz + es = chintz**es**

If the singular noun ends in –f or –fe add –ves after you remove the letters.

Examples:

wife – fe + ves = w**ives**
wolf – f + ves = wol**ves**

NOTE: There are a few exceptions to this rule. Only add –s to the following and do not change the –f or –fe.

belief, cliff, chief, dwarf, grief, gulf, proof, roof

If the singular noun ends in –y, change the –y to –i and add –es.

Examples:

baby -y + ies = bab**ies**

spy -y + ies = sp**ies**

If a singular noun ends in -o, add -s, but there are several exceptions to this rule. For example:

radio + s = radi**s**

NOTE: With the following nouns ending in -o, you would add -es instead of -s:

buffalo, cargo, domino, echo, go, grotto, halo, hero, mango, mosquito, motto, potato, tomato, tornado, torpedo, veto, volcano

Irregular singular nouns are those that change spelling to form the plural.

Examples:

woman = **women**

man = **men**

child = **children**

tooth = **teeth**

foot = **feet**

mouse = **mice**

person = **people**

curriculum = **curricula**

cactus = **cacti**

penny = **pence** (when referring to currency, if referring to the coin, use pennies)

There are a few singular nouns that do not add suffixes or change spelling to refer to the plural form.

Examples: fish, series, cod, sheep, salmon, aircraft, cattle, scissors, deer, moose, trousers

When making a singular compound noun plural, you follow the same rules listed above, but you only apply the plural form to the noun.

Examples:

daughter-in-law = daught**er**s-in-law

landlady = landlad**ies**

six-pack = six-pack**s**

fire-fly = fire-fl**ies**

tennis shoe = tennis sho**es**